DALIT AND BLACK AMERICAN AUTOBIOGRAPHIES: A COMPARATIVE STUDY

A

Research Proposal

Submitted to
Swami Ramanand Teerth Marathwada University, Nanded

For the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy
In
English

Under the Faculty of Arts

By
MR. SHRIKANT SHRISHAIL KASE

Under the Guidance of
DR. D. P. DIGOLE
M. A. SET, Ph. D.
P. G. Department of English and Research Centre
People's College, Nanded (M.S.)

JUNE 2017

DALITAND BLACK AMERICAN AUTOBIOGRAPHIES: A COMPARATIVE STUDY

INTRODUCTION:

The present research study intends to juxtapose the autobiographies written by the Dalits in India with those of Afro-Americans with a view to analyse the nature of oppression, socio-economic inequality, exploitation, resistance and suffering. It also focuses on the ideology of dominant social class, caste and race of Dalits and Blacks as mediated in the autobiographies resulting into diverse forms of oppressions of Dalits in India and Blacks in America. Dalits have been harassed by the dominant class and castes and Blacks suffered from racial discrimination in America, Africa and other nations as well. The forms of harassment and marginalization are diverse in nature. The socio-cultural and economic interests created a nexus between the deprived, marginalized communities and the mainstream society.

Earlier Dalit literature was disregarded by the dominant social class and caste. It was not taken seriously by the mainstream literary critics. Literary works of Dalit writers have been analyzed and interpreted with reference to perpetuated and legitimized values, beliefs of dominant social class and caste. Later, in 1960s, this perspective changed. The new angle of perception has been developed in evaluating the literary work. This research is an attempt in looking Dalit literature with new angle of perception. The ideologies of Phule, Shahu and Ambedkar changed the views of Maharashtrian writers like Anna Bhau Sathe, Baburao Bagul, Daya Pawar, Namdev Dhasal, Mallika Amar Shaikh, Narendra Jadhav, Kishor Shantabai Kale, Sharankumar Limbale and others. They had written noteworthy autobiographies which have represented the problems and issues of Dalits.

The Blacks in America also suffered the evils of slavery and the ‘triple jeopardy’ of race, class, gender discrimination, to use the popular expression of Alice Walker. Earlier they were manipulated by the physical slavery and oppression, scars on back, racial discrimination and alienation. The Black writers in the beginning of the 20th century projected the history of the slavery and harassment of whites on blacks. After the Harlem Renaissance, they talked about black pride, self-respect and self-esteem. Writers like Maya Angelou, James Baldwin, Benjamin Zephaniah, Richard Wright, W. B. B. Du Bois, Malcolm X focused on the saga of freedom,

spiritual regeneration, black respect and pride. They turned their writing from slave narrative to spiritual narrative.

THESIS STATEMENT:

The term *Dalit* is derived from Sanskrit word which tends to signify oppressed, broken and downtrodden. Mahatma Gandhi coined the term *Harijan* for Dalits which means children of God in 1930. This sugarcoated term remained only in the goody-goody mouths of elite class and caste people. The reality of Dalits is something different. This can be finding only in Dalit autobiographies. Black is the derogatory term to the whites. The value of the word changed with the perception of the blacks themselves. The writers of the black changed their own views regarding their self. This research meticulously observers the intellectual and spiritual journey of Dalits and Blacks that is represented in their autobiographies.

SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS:

The proposed research work entitled ***Dalit and Black American Autobiographies: A Comparative Study*** meticulously investigates the social system of Dalits in Maharashtra represented in the selected works of Dalit writers. It chiefly concentrates on the class, inequality and various issues, ideologies and perspectives related to it. It is *analytical* and *interpretative* in nature. For the sake of convenience of the present study of following plays have been selected:

1) Sharankumar Limbale –*Akkarmashi* (The Outcaste) (1984)
2) Urmila Pawar-*Aidaan* (The Weave of My Life) (1999)
3) Bama-*Sangati* (1994)
4) OmprakashValmiki- *Jhootan*(1997)
5) Siddhalingayya- *Ooru Keri*(1997)
6) Malcolm X -*The Autobiography of Malcolm X* (1965)
7) Maya Angelou-*I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* (1969)
8) Bobby Seale- *Seize the Time* (1970)
9) Elaine Brown- *A Taste of Power: A Black Woman's Story*(1994)
10) Barack Obama *The Audacity of Hope*(2008)

This research study will lay its emphasis on the ten autobiographies of the Dalits in India and the Blacks in America.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES:

The present research proposes to work for the fulfillment of the present following objectives.

1) To identify the major issues represented in Black and Dalit Literature
2) To identity the forms of manipulations represented in Black and Dalit Literature.
3) To interpret the prerequisite issues and ideologies represented in the Black and Dalit autobiographies
4) To interpret the realization of oppression and the resistance of Dalits and Blacks
5) To evaluate possibilities of transformation and emancipation of Blacks and Dalits
6) To make the counter- discursive strategy in evaluation of the Black and Dalit ideologies
7) To compare and contrast the diverse issues related to Black and Dalit autobiographies

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE WORK:

The present study will prove significant in understanding major issues related to Black and Dalit literature. A wide- ranging survey of the issues and conflicts involved in this much contested field makes a very useful resource for students and general readers. The research will prove to be successful in addressing the social issues around Black and Dalit literatures in a way that promotes understanding of complexity.

The wide coverage, geographically and chronologically, allows the research to function as an overview of or introduction to Black and Dalit literatures. Black and Dalit works revolve around the society hatred social injustice in Maharashtrian and African-American societies. It should be essential reading of selected Black and Dalit autobiography in investigating new awareness.

HYPOTHESIS:

1) Black and Dalit autobiography explores humiliations and sufferings faced by downtrodden.
2) Black and Dalit autobiography represented problems and issues of both worlds.
3) Black and Dalit autobiography identifies diverse forms of manipulation on downtrodden people.
4) Black and Dalit autobiography's language is revolt but of a deeply introspective towards his emotional world.

5) Black and Current Dalit autobiographies not only explore the oppression but also the optimism for the emancipation.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

The proposed study intends to interpret and evaluate the primary texts by using various issues, perspectives and ideologies Black and Dalit movement. The topic of the research being interpretative hence it claims for various research methods and techniques that would be applied to analyze. The selected autobiographical works bring out the real value of the research. Hence, the research is descriptive and interpretative in nature.

METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION:

The proposed research attempts to consults the source materials on Black and Dalit autobiographical works. For the collection and organization of the research material, the researcher intends to visit different libraries and consult in shaping the ideas. In addition to this, the material related to the present research will be collected from the related books, journals, article, research works and online Journals.

CHAPTER SCHEME

The present research work is divided in to the five chapters for the sake of convenience of study.

Chapter I: Introduction

Dalit literature in English has made bold innovations and fruit experiments in terms of both thematic concern and carious approaches. It provided a new angle of perception to the history, literature, caste, and problems in the social caste system. It also lays its emphasis on many form of domination of established class, caste and religion on downtrodden and unprivileged one. This chapter will concentrate on background of Dalit literature. In addition, the proposed chapter will highlight briefly on the autobiographical sketch of Maharashtrian writers, such as Urmila Pawar, Sharankumar Limbale, Laxman Mane, Kishor Shantabai Kale, Narendra Jadhav. This chapter would also deal with the brief introduction to prerequisite features of Dalit autobiographical works in general. It will also highlight on the shortcomings and limitations of Dalit literature.

Many Black literary works share the general orientation of theorists and scholars toward engaging in an ongoing critique of racial discrimination, Eurocentrism, manipulations and different forms of oppressions. African writers Chinua Achebe, Ngugi Wa Thiong'o, Ama Ata Aidoo, Ralph Ellison, Maya Angelou and Wole Soyinka, for instance, after writing powerful indictments of the British in their country, turned to exposing the deeds of native-born dictators and corrupt officials within their independent homeland. However, postcolonial scholars and literary writers explain this dishonesty as a by-product of colonialism.

Chapter II: Theoretical Perspectives

The theoretical perspectives like Marxism (Ambedkarism), Womanism, Postcolonialism, and the Subaltern approach form the base of this study. .This chapter will consider the theoretical base or models of the same in interpreting various issues represented in the works of Urmila Pawar, Sharankumar Limbale, Laxman Mane, Kishor Shantabai Kale, Narendra Jadhav. It will also consider the black theory for the construction of the theoretical preliminaries of Dalits. All the works will help the researcher to understand various layers of meanings arouse in the works. This chapter will primarily give a brief account of various issues and concepts in analyzing the society represented in the Dalit autobiographies. Literary worksof Black writers can be regarded as historical record of changing consciousness of black Africa and it represents three major phases in African history recording of socio political transition of continent. Novels in the first phase revolve round a rebuilding of lost dignity, denied identity and distorted history. Their project is cultural rehabilitation of the past. They are nationalist and hence anti-colonial. They revolve round the cultural purity of African societies before they were disrupted by the white contact.

Chapter III: Analyzing the Dalit Autobiographies

The proposed chapter will concentrate on the detailed analysis of the nature of Dalit caste system and discrimination and manipulation in establishing the same that is explored in the selected Dalit autobiographies. It will meticulously interpret the oppression and harassment given to the Blacks.

Chapter IV: Selected Black Autobiographies: An Analysis

This chapter will focus on the counter narrative strategies of Dalit autobiographies. This chapter record the consciousness of Dalits towards oppression and harassment and their

negotiation and antagonism towards the manipulation, discrimination of dominant social caste system.

Black literature also builds around the concept of resistance, of resistance as subversion, or opposition. The concept of resistance carries with ideas about human freedom, liberty, identity, individuality, etc., which ideas may not have been held in the same way, in the colonized culture's view of humankind. The idea of *resistance* or *decolonization* provides a primary framework for the critical project of post-colonialism. *Resistance* is a continual referent and at least implicit locus of much postcolonial criticism and theory, particularly in terms of the analysis of the failure, or deferral, of liberation in Africa, South Asia, and the Caribbean. On the one hand, this emphasis upon resistance limits the purview of (post) colonial experience, in that it 'denies any other kind of life to the people doing the resisting. For many critics of postcolonial theory, the emergence of colonial discourse theory has shifted attention away from the materialist concerns of the economic and political forms and effects of colonialism to concerns of discourse, language, and identity. Postcolonial literature has seemingly reduced colonialism to a cultural project, eliding its material impacts on colonized peoples and, more importantly, its role within the emergence of capitalism globally, both as an ideology and as a structure of material relationships. Significantly, the work of Frantz Fanon has been central to both the colonial discourse analysis of theorists such as Homi K. Bhabha.

Chapter V- Comparative Analysis of the Black and Dalit Texts

This chapter measures the major reasons of the emancipation and transformation of Blacks and Dalits represented in the autobiographies. It will highlight on the problems and prospects of degeneration of Blacks and Dalits and will also focus on the possibilities of emancipation of them. It will also compare and contrast the genuine reasons of the development of the Blacks and Dalits.

Chapter VI – Conclusion

This chapter includes the brief survey of the entire process of investigation as well as the general summary of research experience. It will highlight on overall performance of Black and Dalit autobiographical work. It may take brief consideration of merits and demerits of selected plays. Following conclusions will be derived by the entire process of investigation. This chapter will finally concentrates on the major findings figured out from the study. It will also concentrate on the scope and suggestions for the further studies.

PRIMARY SOURCES

1) Limbale, Sharankumar. *The Outcaste* (*Akkarmashi*). London: Oxford Uni. Press, 1984.
2) Pawar, Urmila. *Aidaan.* Trans. The Weave of My Life. Columbia University Press, 1999.
3) Bama. *Sangati*. London: Oxford University Press, 1994.
4) Valmiki, Omprakash. *Jhootan*. Columbia University Press, 1997.
5) Siddhalingayya- *Ooru Keri*. India: Sahitya Akademi, 1997.
6) Malcolm X. *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*. Ishi Press, 1965.
7) Angelou, Maya. *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*. London: Hachette Digital, 1969.
8) Seale, Bobby. *Seize the Time*. Baltimore: Black Classic Press, 1970.
9) Elaine Brown. *A Taste of Power: A Black Woman's Story*. New York: Anchor Books, 1994.
10) Obama, Barack. *The Audacity of Hope*. New York: Penguin Publications. 2008.

SECONDARY SOURCES

1) Ambedkar. Dr. Babasaheb. *Speeches and Writings*. Vol. 1-21. Govt. of Maharashtra.
2) Ahluwalia, D.P.S. *Politics and Post-Colonial Theory: African Inflections*. London: Routledge, 2000.
3) Ahmad, Aijaz. *In Theory: Classes, Nations, Literatures*. London: Verso, 1992.
4) Ashcroft, William D., Gareth Griffith, and Helen Tiffin, eds. *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures*. London: Routledge, 1989.
5) Ashcroft, Bill; Griffiths, Gareth and Tiffin, Helen (eds.) (1995). *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader*. London: Routledge.
6) Ambedkar, B. R. *What Congress and Gandhi have done for Untouchables*. Bombay: Thacker and Co., 1945.
7) Clark, Romy and Ivanic, Roz. *The Politics of Writing*. London: Routledge, 1997.
8) Hazari. *Untouchable: The Autobiography of an Indian Outcaste*. New York: Praeger Publishers, 1970.
9) Bhabha, Homi K. (1994). *The Location of Culture*. London: Routledge.
10) Boehmer, Elleke (1995). *Colonial and Postcolonial Literature*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

11) Limbale, Sharankumar. *Towards the Aesthetics of Dalit Literature*. Orient Longman, 2004.

12) Mohanty, Chandra Talpade. *On Race and Voice: Challenges for Liberal Education in the 1990s.* Cultural Critique 14, 1990.

13) Ngugi Wa Thiong'o. *Decolonizing the Mind. The Politics of Language in African Literature*. Portsmouth: Heinemann, 1986

14) Said, Edward. *Orientalism*. New York: Vintage Books, 1978.

15) Said, Edward. *Culture and Imperialism*. New York: Knopf, 1993.

WEBLIOGRAPHY

1) **Guttenberg.org**
2) **Archive.org**
3) **Google Scholar**
4) **INFLIBNET**
5) **Mahatma Gandhi Online Thesis**
6) **British Library Online Thesis**
7) **https://books.google.co.in/books?hl=en&lr=&id=Bg0rOOqvBMkC&oi=fnd&pg=PR7&dq=dalit+literature&ots=xsKoOVRjfD&sig=G0-zWnV37c6SAP_DC7LVRbsr-eQ**